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Canada

Organic Products

Federal Funding for National Organic Research and Education Center 2001

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Report Highlights: Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) has announced federal funding of nearly C\$1 million to create the Organic Agriculture Center of Canada. The center will act as a national center for education and research in organic agriculture, respond to a growing demand for knowledge in the fast-emerging sector and, according to AAFC, help provide the Canadian organic industry with a competitive edge in international marketing.

Includes PSD changes: No
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Summary: Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lyle Vanclief has announced federal funding of nearly C\$1 million to create the Organic Agriculture Center of Canada. The center, to be based at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College in Truro, Nova Scotia, will act as a national center for education and research in organic agriculture, respond to a growing demand for knowledge in the fast-emerging sector and, according to Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), help provide the Canadian organic industry with a competitive edge in international marketing. Specifically, federal funding will help to develop at least four web-based courses in organic agriculture, which will be offered to students and farmers across Canada. Funding will also be used to conduct on-farm research across Canada on transition strategies to organic production. Market research will track consumer preferences for specific commodities and identify opportunities for producers. Funds will also go towards the cost of sorting and cataloguing existing research, and the development of a help desk and newsletter.

In June 2001, AAFC announced federal funding totaling C\$600,000 (\$400,000) to help Canadian organic food producers increase domestic and international sales (see CA1082). The bulk of that federal assistance money will fund the Organic Accreditation Assistance Program, a plan to encourage certifying bodies to apply for accreditation under Canada's Organic Standard.

The text of the press release from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada follows:

BADDECK, N.S., July 12, 2001 – A national center for education and research in organic agriculture will help quench a growing thirst for knowledge in this fast-emerging sector and give Canada's producers an advantage over international competition.

Agriculture and Agri-Food Minister Lyle Vanclief today announced C\$854,700 in federal funding for the facility. Known as the Organic Agriculture Center of Canada, it will be based at the Nova Scotia Agricultural College (NSAC) in Truro and will carry out initiatives in collaboration with colleges and universities across the country.

"Success in agriculture and agri-food is becoming more and more reliant on education, knowledge and technology," said Mr. Vanclief. "Organic agriculture is presenting producers with excellent opportunities and this new center will ensure they stay on top of the learning curve and that Canada continues to enhance its reputation as a world class supplier of organic food."

Canada's organic sector is enjoying C\$1 billion-a-year in retail sales and a 20 per cent annual growth rate. Significant opportunities to take this growth even further exist in several major markets such as the United States, Europe and Japan.

The national center in Truro is designed to help industry reach these growth targets. Producing organically demands detailed knowledge of the biological process and excellent farm management skills. The center will ensure organic farmers and those interested in making the transition into organic production have the expertise they need and will also provide them with leading edge technologies.

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agriculture, which will be offered to students and farmers across Canada. Funding will also be used to conduct on-farm research across Canada on transition strategies to organic production. Market research will track consumer preferences for specific commodities and identify opportunities for producers. Funds will also go towards the cost of sorting and cataloguing existing research, and the development of a help desk and newsletter.

"The NSAC is a great setting for this center," said Dr. Bernie MacDonald, vice-principal of administration at NSAC. "We are very pleased to be playing a key role in this collaborative effort. Organic agriculture is offering new opportunities to Canada's sector and this new initiative should help ensure we make the most of them."

Mr. Vanclief also announced C\$27,000 to help Canada's organic industry develop a strategy to focus on its priorities in the domestic market, and strategies for competing in international markets. The strategy will be coordinated by a team of partners, including the NSAC.

These two initiatives come on top of C\$600,000 in federal funding for the organic sector announced by the Minister in early June, and C\$1.3 million in support for regional organic projects, bringing total funding for organic agriculture to about C\$2.8 million.

"Support for the organic sector is part of the Government of Canada's ongoing commitment to helping the sector diversify and pursue new growth opportunities," said Mr. Vanclief.

Federal funding for both the strategy and the Organic Agriculture Center of Canada come from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's C\$60-million-a-year Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) fund. CARD is designed to foster the increased long-term growth, employment and competitiveness of Canada's agriculture and agri-food industry.

End Press Release Text

Related Reports from FAS/Ottawa:

Report Number	Title of Report	Date
CA1082	Financial Assistance for Organic Food Producers	7/5/2001
CA9053	National Organic Standard Announced	5/3/1999

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